1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FYS Tanala FYS

kept clean, being bathed at least once a day with cold water. Very 854
small children are carried in the arms almost constantly, husbands and older children doing their share. From the age of about four months on, the child is carried in the back of its mother's dress (see Costume). It is supported by the belt about her waist and sits with its legs on either side of her body and its head and shoulders protruding above the garment. It is protected from sun and rain by a small mat hung about her neck. These baby covers are always made by the women themselves and it is impossible to purchase one which has been in use, although this seems to be only a matter of sentiment on the mother's part. The child remains on the mother's back except at night or when it is being nursed. I have often seen women with children on their backs working in the fields, the baby sleeping soundly although its head was jerked to and fro by her movements. Children continue to be carried for some time after they can walk.

No clothing is worn under the age of about three years. Even when carried on the back, there is no equivalent for the European diaper. As soon as the child begins to be carried in the mother's [863]
dress it is slapped for befouling her and it learns to control its functions at a surprisingly early age. This was the only offense for which I ever saw a Tanala child punished.

Nursing seems to be continued as long as the mother's milk holds 853
out, although the infant is given a little rice or other soft food as soon as it will take it. There is no idea of regularity in feeding and the child is given the breast whenever it cries. It is generally believed that a new pregnancy has a bad effect on the health of the child next older. As many mothers are still nursing when the pregnancy begins, this belief probably has a sound basis of fact, but they ascribe the poor health of the older child to its jealousy of the coming one.

Infant mortality is excessively high and even prior to European 165
contact the population must have remained almost static. No statis- 169
tics are available but practically every family I knew had lost one or more children in infancy. The greatest loss seems to be from intestinal diseases, but small children also suffer from malaria. Adults, on the other hand, appear to be almost immune as long as they remain in their own districts. When they go elsewhere, they are liable to contract it, although usually in a milder form than Europeans.

CIRCUMCISION

All males are circumcised, but there is no corresponding operation 304
for females. The circumciser is a professional, but the trade is not

608 791 of each with a sharp knife. Each man takes a piece of raw ginger root and smears it with his own blood. They face each other and each covers the other's eyes with his left hand while he places the ginger root in the other's mouth with his right. They do this simultaneously, repeating together: "May you also become blind if you are a traitor to me." The *ombiasy* then takes a leaf of the *longoja* plant and pulls it into two pieces lengthwise, saying: "If either of you is a traitor, may his body be torn in two like this leaf, so that one part will be on the east coast of this island and the other on the west." Half the leaf is laid on the eastern and half on the western side of the house. Then the oath brothers pay the *ombiasy* and witnesses, and name and point out to each other the members of their families.

The above account was obtained from Ratsakoba, an *ombiasy* of the Zafindiamanana gens of the Tanala Menabe, and is a description of a particular ceremony which he had himself directed. Accounts obtained from other *ombiasy* indicate that each one has his own formula, although all of these conform to a definite pattern. The use of the rice winnower, grasping of the spear, tapping with the knife, invocation first of the gods and then of the ancestors, and the eating of ginger root smeared with each other's blood, are constant. The materials mixed in the rice winnower, the terms of the contract and the blessings and imprecations are variable. One set of imprecations is as follows: 1. May illness come and slay the traitor. 2. May his liver become diseased and be covered with spots. 3 and 4. Same as in imprecations previously given. 5. May the sickness turn and turn in him, i.e., may it be constantly active and attack all organs. 6. May the malady enter him six times a day. 7. May his gall bladder burst. 8. May the illness, when it comes, kill him before he can drink water, i.e., instantly. 9. May sickness spread through his whole body. 10. May all his limbs be broken.

728 796 When a village was captured and reduced to vassalage the heads of the lineages and more important families were required to take an oath of loyalty to the victors. This was identical in content and procedure with the oath of blood brotherhood except that the victors remained unbound. The natives knew of no instance in which the chiefs of two gentes had entered into blood brotherhood to cement an alliance between their followers.

OLD AGE

145 Although no vital statistics are available for the Tanala, the life expectation for adults seems to be little if at all inferior to that

1: Linton E-6 (1936-37) 1938 FYS Tanala FYS

for Europeans. The death rate is very high during infancy and early childhood and those who survive this perilous period are, necessarily, of strong physique. Old people are to be seen in all villages. It seemed to me that women were slightly more numerous than men, but I have no proof of this. The actual ages of individuals are hard to determine, for none of the Menabe know the dates of their births, but from incidents which they remember it is safe to say that persons of sixty to seventy years are fairly numerous, while a few reach eighty years and over.

Most of the old people seem to be mentally and physically alert. Senile dementia is almost unknown. Deafness is very rare, but blindness is not infrequent. I saw two cases of cataract and several other cases of blindness due to infections. The strength and activity of old people are often amazing. This holds true for other Malagasy tribes as well as the Tanala. A missionary living among the Betsileo told me that the mother of their maid servant, who was herself middle-aged, had decided some months before that she was too old to live without someone to wait on her. She had come to get the maid, walking over eighty miles. Two of my Menabe informants, who were both over seventy, seemed as active as young men and still did their full share of work in the rice fields. One of them was living in a neighboring village and regularly walked ten miles daily over hilly country, five miles each way, without suffering fatigue.

Old people continue the regular activities of adults until they become feeble or otherwise incapacitated. After this they assume the lighter duties of child tending. It seemed to me that the relations between children and old people were closer and more friendly than those between parent and child. The old people tell the children stories, show them how to make toys, supervise their games, etc. The children in turn wait on the old people willingly. There seem to be many friendships between old men and children who are not closely related to them. The children are taught to treat all old people with respect and habitually address them, even if they are strangers, as grandfather or grandmother.

Young adults are also respectful, as a rule, for disrespect would be considered a sign of ill breeding, but they have no superstitious reverence for age and I have heard young men make fun of old ones, although never to their faces. The middle-aged treat the old, except those of their immediate family, very much as equals. In village councils, etc., age in itself does not confer authority. A